

I am writing to express my concern about the FCC Broadcast Flag Proposal for digital television. I urge you to reject the proposal.

This proposal is unnecessary. The FCC has already mandated digital television receivers in all sets manufactured after a certain date. Therefore, the adoption of digital television is a fait accompli. No additional incentives are required to bring "free and clear" digital broadcasting into being. Laws to curtail copyright violations are already in effect, and should be enforced by law enforcement, not the FCC.

The Proposal will force expensive technology on the electronics industry, the cost of which will be ultimately passed to consumers. The patents involved in implementing the Proposal will add costs to every receiver manufactured. Since the FCC is mandating digital television receivers in all television sets, anyone buying a receiver, rich or poor, will be forced to subsidize this, paying more for less.

The proposal will be a disaster for consumers. Consumers are accustomed to being able to "time shift" programs for their viewing convenience and make personal copies for private viewing or review. This Proposal makes it impossible to continue doing this. There is no restriction on what programming may use the "broadcast flag," so any programming might have this. There will be confusion, as consumers try to figure out what can and can't be taped, and it will make the whole process less flexible and friendly.

This Proposal will also stifle innovation in the market. Any new technology that might be incompatible with the "broadcast flag" will be unavailable in this country.

In closing, I urge you to require the content industry to demonstrate that its proposed technologies will allow for all legal uses and will actually achieve the stated goal of preventing piracy. If they cannot, I urge you not to mandate the broadcast flag.